Hiring of women and infants for begging

*108. DR. P.C. ALEXANDER: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a massive increase in the practice of hiring the services of women and infants by begger mafia for begging at public places in big cities of the country, particularly in Delhi; and

(b) if so, the steps being taken by Government to prevent the exploitation of women and children by the begger mafia?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) As informed by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the subject of beggary is a State subject and in the absence of relevant data/records being available in respect of beggary, it is not possible to indicate whether there has been an increase in the practice of hiring the services of women and infants by beggar mafias for begging at public places in big cities of the country.

The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Government of NCT of Delhi] has informed that the beggar population is a floating population and keeps migrating in and out of Delhi. Hence, assessment of exact number of beggars in Delhi at any point of time is difficult. As per a survey recently carried out by the Government of NCT of Delhi in all 134 Municipal Corporation of Delhi [MCD] wards, the average figure was approximately 58,570 beggars in the NCT of Delhi.

(b) According to the information given by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, a Central Sector Scheme had been formulated in 1992-93, with the aim of providing facilities for the technical education and vocational training of beggars, engaging beggars in productive work so as to faciliate their reintegration into society and also involving voluntary welfare organizations. However, the scheme has been discontinued from 1998-99 in view of rather moderate demand from the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. Presently, that Ministry is not implementing any scheme for curbing beggary or for welfare of beggars.

As per the information received from the Government of NCT of Delhi, regular enforcement action is carried out under the provisions of Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959 as extended to Delhi to curb the practice of begging as a whole.

Development policy for linguistic minorities

*109. DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be please to State:

(a) whether Government are formulating linguistic minorities and their development policy;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof, State-wise and Union Territory-wise; and

(c) the protection and development policies formulated for Tamil minorities in Delhi and other northern States?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise

(c) For the protection and development of Tamil minorities in Delhi and other northern States, no special policy has been formulated.

Metering of feeders, distribution transformers and consumer connections

*110. SHRI MOTIUR RAHMAN: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Accelerated Power Development and Reforms Programme (APDRP) envisaged 100 per cent metering of feeders, distribution transformers (DTs) and consumer connections;

(b) if so, the details of the progress made thereon; and

(c) the measures taken to complete 100 per cent feeder, DT and consumer metering in all the ongoing and completed APDRP projects, within a clearly defined timeframe?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SHINDE): (a) to (c) The Accelerated Power Development and Reforms Programme (APDRP) envisaged 100 per cent metering of 11 KV feeders. In addition, a few Distribution Transformer (DT) metering and consumer metering projects have also been sanctioned under the APDRP. As reported, 98% feeder metering has been achieved at national level. Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal have reported 100% feeder metering. All APDRP projects including metering projects are to be completed within 18 to 36 months from the date of sanction of the project.

Power generation cost of NTPC

†* 111. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

With the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that cost of power generation by the National Thermal Power Corporation is higher than that of other private sector companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the bids of private sector companies for Sasan Ultra Mega Power Project was lower, as compared to the bid of the National Thermal Power Corporation; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction in that regard?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SHINDE): (a) and (b) No, Sir. It is not true to say that the cost of generation of NTPC power stations is higher than the private sector power plants. The cost of generation of electricity depends

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.